

## Clark University Clark Digital Commons

---

Syllabus Share

Special Collections

---

Fall 2015

# PSCI 050--Intro to American Govt

Mark C. Miller

Clark University, [mmiller@clarku.edu](mailto:mmiller@clarku.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.clarku.edu/syllabi>

---

### Recommended Citation

Miller, Mark C., "PSCI 050--Intro to American Govt" (2015). *Syllabus Share*. 5.  
<https://commons.clarku.edu/syllabi/5>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections at Clark Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabus Share by an authorized administrator of Clark Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [mkrikonis@clarku.edu](mailto:mkrikonis@clarku.edu), [jodolan@clarku.edu](mailto:jodolan@clarku.edu).

PolSci050, Intro to Amer Govt, Fall2015, UG  
Clark University  
Political Science/LAS 050: Introduction to American Government  
Office: 308 Jefferson Academic Center  
Office Hours: MW 10-10:45am, Th 11:00am-noon  
Other hours by appointment

Fall 2015  
Professor: Mark C. Miller  
Office Phone: 508-793-7233  
mmiller@clarku.edu

### Required Books:

Lowi, Ginsberg, Shepsle, and Ansolabehere, American Government: Power and Purpose, Brief 13<sup>th</sup> ed.  
Referred to as "Text".  
Miller, Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Pol Issues, 19<sup>th</sup> expanded ed. 2015.  
Referred to as "Reader". (Make sure you have the 19<sup>th</sup> edition of this book).  
Sidlow, Challenging the Incumbent. 2004. CQ Press.  
Spitzer, The Politics of Gun Control, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. 2014. Paradigm.  
Lewis, Gideon's Trumpet. 1964. Vintage.

### Recommended Book:

Williams, Kristen. Research and Writing Guide for Political Science. Oxford University Press.

All books are available at the university bookstore and are on closed reserve at Goddard Library.

In addition, students must read daily the New York Times. Current events quizzes will come from the Monday through Friday front sections of the hard copy version of this newspaper. Individual hard copy subscriptions can be purchased from the professor for \$49.00 for the semester; digital subscriptions can be purchased directly from the New York Times. More details about the current events quizzes will be discussed in class.

<u>Exams and Grading:</u>	Current Events Quizzes	10%
	2-3 page paper	10%
	First in-class all-essay Midterm	15%
	Second in-class all-essay Midterm	20%
	10-15 page research paper	20%
	Two Hour Final Examination	25%

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS: In order to get their money's worth and have fun with this class, students should want to work hard and think hard. Thus I assume all students will always attend class and complete all reading and paper assignments on time. Since this course transfers as 4 semester hours, students should expect to spend at least 180 hours on this class over the course of the semester, including the time when the class actually meets. Students must **contact the professor BEFORE the due date** concerning any late papers or problems with exams. Late papers will be penalized 5 points per day. Hard copy papers must be turned in; no emailed papers will be accepted. No electronics in class without permission.

Class participation and attendance will weigh heavily in deciding borderline grades. Make-up exams or quizzes will be given only under extraordinary circumstances. Leave a voicemail or email if you can't reach me in person concerning any problems with the class. I only respond to email during normal business hours. I often respond to voicemails more quickly than emails.

Reading and other Assignments:

What is Democracy? — August 24, 26, 28

Text: Chpt 1

Reader: Issue 1.1

The Constitution and the Federalist Papers— August 31, September 2, 4

Text: Chpt 2, Federalist Paper 10 in appendix, Federalist Paper 51 in appendix

Reader: Issue 3.3

Reserve Reading: Connecticut Death Penalty Law is Unconstitutional, Court Rules

Ideology: Modern American Liberals and Conservatives — September 9, 11, 14

Reader: Intro Portion and Issues 1.3, 4.4

Reserve Reading: Inequality Troubles Americans Across Party Lines

Public Opinion and the Media — September 16, 18

Text: Chpt 9

Reserve Reading: Poll Finds Most in U.S. Hold Dim View of Race Relations

Reserve Reading: The Supreme Court's Gap on Race and Juries

Political Socialization Paper: 2–3 page paper due Monday Sept 21

Voting and Elections — September 21, 23, 25

Reserve Reading: California Democratic Party v. Jones

Text: Chpt 10

Reader: Issues 3.6

Sidlow: **ALL**

Reserve Reading: Tea Partiers and Traditional Republicans are Split on Science

Reserve Reading: Voting Case has Potential to Put House Further Out of Reach for Democrats

Reserve Reading: Democrats Wage a National Fight Over Voter Rules

Political Parties and Interest Groups — September 28, 30

Text: Chpts 11, 12

Reader: Issues 1.2

Reserve Reading: Is the Democratic Party Getting too Liberal?

Reserve Reading: Many D.C. Think Tanks Now Players in Partisan Wars

Reserve Reading: The Unlobbyists

First Midterm — Friday, October 2

Federalism — Oct 5, 7

Text: Chpt 3

Reader: Issue 3.7

Reserve Reading: Washington State Faces \$100,000 per day Fine until Schools Plan is Reached

Reserve Reading: States Confront Wide Budget Gaps Even After Years of Recovery

**Library Research Presentation** on Term Paper and other Political Science Research – Friday Oct 9

Bring your laptops to class for the presentation from the reference librarians.

Congress — Oct 14, 16, 19, 21, 23

Text: Chpts 5, 13

Reader: Issues 2.3, 3.4, 1.4, 4.1

Spitzer: **ALL**

Reserve Reading: Congressman Pushes Staff Hard, or Out the Door

Reserve Reading: GOP Turns to the Courts to Aid Agenda

Reserve Reading: House Republicans, Seizing on Health Law, Challenge Executive Branch

The Presidency — Oct 26, 28, 30

Text: Chpts 6, 14

Reader: Issues 2.1, 4.3

Reserve Reading: Obama's Use of Executive Power Spurs Intense Lobbying

Reserve Reading: Restoring Balance Among the Branches in Government in Washington

Final Draft of 10-15 page research paper due — Friday Oct 30

See Williams book for assistance

The Permanent Federal Bureaucracy — Nov 2, 4

Text: Chpt 7

Reader: Issue 2.4

Reserve Reading: Supreme Court Rebukes Obama on Right of Appointment

Reserve Reading: Tragedy or Triumph

Second Midterm — Friday Nov 6 (tentative date)

The Judiciary — Nov 9, 11, 13, 16, 18, 20

Text: Chpt 8

Reader: Issues 2.2, 3.5, 4.2, 4.6

Lewis: **ALL**

Reserve Reading: Keep the Briefs Brief, Literary Justices Advise

Reserve Reading: Three Justices Bound By Beliefs, Not Just Gender

Reserve Reading: It's All Right With Sam

Reserve Reading: Bipartisan Push Builds to Relax Sentencing Laws

Civil Rights and Civil Liberties — Nov 23, 30, Dec 2, 4, 7

Text: Chpt 4

Reader: Issues 3.1, 3.2, 4.7

Reserve Reading: Supreme Court Allows Use of Execution Drug

Reserve Reading: The Polarized Court

Reserve Reading: Exclusion of Blacks from Juries Raises Renewed Scrutiny

Reserve Reading: How to Cut the Prison Population

Reserve Reading: The Challenges that Remain after Marriage Equality

**Final Examination — Monday December 14 from 10:30am to 12:30pm**